

8. Could Mill consistently argue that the Nazis be prohibited from marching through a Jewish community?
9. Why, according to Mill, are people who are "capable of being improved by free and equal discussion," so often persuaded by what is false? (pages 18, 24, 26)
10. Would Mill argue that it is in the interests of a progressive society that drugs, prostitution, and pornography be legalized and unimpeded?
11. Does Mill believe that a "completely free" society is possible? (page 21)
12. Why does Mill hold that "no belief which is contrary to truth can be really useful"? (page 29)
13. Why, according to Mill, are most educated persons actually ignorant? (page 32)

### EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

1. Does government have an obligation to step in to prevent a person from intentionally doing bodily injury to himself?
2. Does the present state of human society reflect that "man [is] a progressive being"?
3. Does constant questioning of accepted standards of behavior make a society stronger?
4. Is it possible for one to let "the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him"? (page 41)
5. In human society is it possible to pursue one's own good without impeding others' efforts to obtain their good?

### PASSAGES FOR TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- A. Pages 17–18, the paragraph beginning,  
*The object of this Essay...*
- B. Page 19 beginning,  
*It is proper to state...*  
 to *...penalties are not safely applicable by general disapprobation.*

- C. Pages 20–21 beginning,

*But there is a sphere of action...*

to *...each to live as seems good to the rest....*

- D. Pages 39–40 beginning,

*No one's idea of excellence in conduct...*

to *He who does anything because it is the custom makes no choice.*

- E. Pages 41–42 beginning,

*He who lets the world...*

to the end of the selection.

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### SHAKESPEARE: HAMLET

#### INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

**Why doesn't Hamlet "sweep to his revenge" immediately as he promises the ghost? (page 68)**

1. Does Hamlet want to avenge his father's death? (Act III, Scene One; Act I, Scene Five; Act II, Scene Two)
2. Why does Hamlet "put an antic disposition on"? (Act I, Scene Five, page 73)
3. Is Hamlet mad?
4. Why does Hamlet sum up his problem as "To be or not to be..."? (Act III, Scene One, page 99)
5. Does Hamlet arrange for the play because he doubts the ghost, or for some other reason? (Act II, Scene Two, pages 95–96)
6. Why is Hamlet oppressed by a consciousness of his own sinful nature? (Act III, Scene One, page 101)

7. Is Hamlet's decision not to kill Claudius at prayer an example of "thinking too precisely on the event"? (Act III, Scene Three, page 118; Act IV, Scene Four, page 132)
8. Is Hamlet a coward? (Act III, Scene One, pages 99–100; Act IV, Scene Four, pages 132–33)
9. Why is Hamlet spurred to revenge by the sight of Fortinbras' army if he believes their goal is merely a "straw"? (Act IV, Scene Four, pages 132–33)
10. Why, despite his forebodings, does Hamlet agree to fence with Laertes? (Act V, Scene Two, pages 163–64)
11. Why is it only when he himself is dying that Hamlet can kill Claudius?

**Is Hamlet more troubled by his mother's marriage to Claudius than by his father's death?**

1. Why is Gertrude so quick to marry Claudius?
2. Why does the ghost warn Hamlet not to punish Gertrude but to leave her to heaven and her conscience? (Act I, Scene Five, page 70; Act III, Scene Four, page 122)
3. Why does Hamlet reprove Gertrude? (Act III, Scene Four)
4. Why doesn't Hamlet tell Gertrude plainly that Claudius murdered her husband? (Act III, Scene Four, page 119)
5. After Hamlet has killed Polonius, does Gertrude believe he is mad or only say so to keep their conversation a secret? (Act IV, Scene One, page 126)
6. Why does Gertrude not want to see Ophelia? (Act IV, Scene Five, page 133)
7. Does Claudius love Gertrude or does he marry her only to strengthen his position as king?
8. Does Claudius want to be a father to Hamlet? (Act I, Scene Two, page 54)
9. Does Hamlet envy Claudius?

**Does Hamlet love Ophelia? (Act III, Scene One, pages 100–1)**

1. Does Shakespeare believe that Ophelia is right to obey her father and brother and break off her ties with Hamlet? (Act I, Scene Three, pages 61, 63)

2. Why does Hamlet go to Ophelia's room appearing mad and terrifying? (Act II, Scene One, pages 76–77)
3. Why does Hamlet tell Ophelia that he loved her not? (Act III, Scene One, page 101)
4. Does Hamlet notice that Polonius and Claudius are overhearing his conversation with Ophelia? (Act III, Scene One, page 101)
5. After spurning Ophelia, why does Hamlet jest with her while they watch the play? (Act III, Scene Two, pages 106–8)
6. Why in her madness does Ophelia sing a bawdy song? (Act IV, Scene Five, page 135)
7. Why does Hamlet show little concern about his part in causing Ophelia's madness and death?
8. Why is Hamlet angry at Laertes' grief for Ophelia? (Act V, Scenes One and Two, pages 155–57; 159–60)
9. Does Shakespeare portray Ophelia as truly virtuous or merely untested?

**Why does Shakespeare have so many innocent people destroyed in the course of Hamlet's revenge?**

1. Why does Shakespeare have Hamlet kill Polonius?
2. Why does Hamlet feel no regret at the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? (Act V, Scene Two, page 159)
3. Does Shakespeare believe that justice is satisfied when Laertes kills Hamlet?
4. Why does Shakespeare have Hamlet killed by the poison on Laertes' sword? (Act V, Scene Two, page 167)
5. Does Shakespeare consider Fortinbras a model for Hamlet to follow?
6. Is Hamlet corrupted in the course of his revenge?

**EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS**

1. Does too careful thought inhibit action?
2. If someone wronged you in a way that couldn't be punished legally, would you consider it right to take revenge?
3. Is there a difference between seeking justice and pursuing revenge?

4. Do emotion and thought enhance or conflict with each other?
5. Is madness a choice some people make?

### PASSAGES FOR TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- A. Pages 132–33, Act IV, Scene Four, Hamlet's speech beginning,  
*How all occasions do inform against me...*
- B. Pages 99–101, Act III, Scene One, Hamlet's soliloquy and conversation with Ophelia beginning,  
*To be, or not to be...*  
to *To a nunnery, go.*
- C. Pages 94–96, Act II, Scene Two, Hamlet's speech beginning,  
*O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I:*  
to the end of the scene.

\*

## BIBLE: THE GOSPEL OF MARK

### INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

1. Why does Jesus refer to himself as the "Son of man" and not as the "Son of God"? (pages 175, 189, 191)
2. Does Mark suggest that salvation will be achieved by the few or by the many?
3. Does Jesus speak in parables to make the word clearer or because what he wants to convey is inexplicable?
4. Why is "the mystery of the kingdom of God" conveyed through parables to everyone but the disciples? (pages 178–79)
5. According to Mark, do we choose to have faith or does God ordain it?
6. Is Jesus' need to withdraw from people a sign of his humanity or of his godliness? (cf. pages 176–77, 181, 189–90)

7. Is Jesus reluctant to perform miracles, or does he think that they are the best way to instill faith in the multitudes?
8. Why does Jesus cure the man with palsy by forgiving him for his sins? (page 175)
9. Why does possession by devils or unclean spirits enable men to recognize Jesus as the Son of God? (pages 174, 177, 180)
10. Why won't Jesus allow himself to be called good? (page 183)
11. Does Jesus want people to fear him?
12. Is it human weakness that causes Jesus to commend the woman who anoints him? (page 188)
13. Why does Jesus destroy the fig tree?
14. When Jesus tells the disciples that one of them will betray him, why doesn't he say which one? (pages 188–89)
15. By asking his disciples to consume the bread and wine of his body, is Jesus requiring them to enact a parable? (page 189)
16. Why doesn't Jesus answer the false charges that are brought against him? (pages 191–92)
17. Why, though he is accused by the chief priests, is Jesus' fate ultimately decided by the multitude? (page 192)
18. Why does Jesus say that "the sower" of the kingdom of God can sleep after he sows? (page 179)
19. Is the "new testament" of Jesus meant to break with tradition or to build on it? (page 189; cf. 176, 182, 183–84, 185, 186–87, 191–92, 194)
20. According to Mark, can we attain the Kingdom of God on earth? (cf. pages 174, 178, 179, 182, 183–84, 187)

### EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

1. Is it true that we receive exactly as much as we give? (page 178)
2. Why is it just for God to give to him "that hath" and take from him "that hath not"? (page 178)
3. Does Christianity appear in this gospel as fundamentally anti-intellectual?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE's birth date is uncertain, but he was baptized in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon, England. Many of the details of Shakespeare's life are unknown or contested. His father was a shopkeeper and glover who was a prominent local citizen, serving Stratford as a burgess, an alderman, and as bailiff. William Shakespeare was educated only at the local grammar school, where he studied Latin and most likely read the plays of Terence and Plautus. He married in 1582 and had three children. It is unclear when and how Shakespeare went to London and began working in the theater, but by 1594 he had joined the Lord Chamberlain's Company of players as an actor, a playwright, and a shareholder. *The Comedy of Errors*, probably first performed in 1591, was one of Shakespeare's earliest plays; his latest dates to 1613. *Hamlet* was first performed sometime between 1600 and 1601. Shakespeare enjoyed some degree of prosperity, purchasing one of the largest homes in Stratford in 1597 and acquiring 107 acres of farmland in 1602. Shakespeare's plays were published in his lifetime, but none with his approval. He died in 1616.

From *The Tragedy of Hamlet, King of Denmark*, edited by Jack Randall Crawford. Publisher: Yale University Press, 1943.

# Hamlet

## CHARACTERS

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark  
 HAMLET, Son to the late, and Nephew to the present King  
 FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway  
 HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet  
 POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain  
 LAERTES, his Son  
 VOLTIMAND                      GUILDENSTERN  
 CORNELIUS                      OSRIC  
 ROSENCRANTZ                      A Gentleman  
 A Priest  
 MARCELLUS and BERNARDO, Officers  
 FRANCISCO, a Soldier  
 REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius  
 A Captain  
 English Ambassadors  
 Players      Two Clowns      Grave-diggers  
 GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark and Mother to Hamlet  
 OPHELIA, Daughter to Polonius  
 Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailor, Messenger, and Attendants  
 Ghost of Hamlet's Father

SCENE: *Denmark*

## ACT I

SCENE ONE—*Elsinore. A Platform of the Castle.**Enter BERNARDO and FRANCISCO, two Sentinels.*

BERNARDO: Who's there?

FRANCISCO: Nay, answer me; stand, and unfold yourself.

BERNARDO: Long live the king!

FRANCISCO: Bernardo?

BERNARDO: He.

FRANCISCO: You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO: 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRANCISCO: For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO: Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO: Not a mouse stirring.

BERNARDO: Well, good-night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals<sup>1</sup> of my watch, bid them make haste.*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

FRANCISCO: I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

HORATIO: Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS: And liegemen to the Dane.

FRANCISCO: Give you good-night.

MARCELLUS: O! farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath reliev'd you?

FRANCISCO: Bernardo has my place.

Give you good-night. *Exit FRANCISCO.*

MARCELLUS: Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO: Say,

What! is Horatio there?

HORATIO: A piece of him.

<sup>1</sup> [*rivals: partners.*]

BERNARDO: Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: What! has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BERNARDO: I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS: Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us:

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night;

That if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO: Tush, tush! 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO: Sit down awhile,

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we two nights have seen.

HORATIO: Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BERNARDO: Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one,—

*Enter the GHOST.*

MARCELLUS: Peace! break thee off; look, where it comes again!

BERNARDO: In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS: Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO: Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO: Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO: It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS: Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO: What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

MARCELLUS: It is offended.

BERNARDO: See! it stalks away.

HORATIO: Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!  
*Exit the GHOST.*

MARCELLUS: 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BERNARDO: How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on 't?

HORATIO: Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS: Is it not like the king?

HORATIO: As thou art to thyself:

Such was the very armour he had on

When he the ambitious Norway combated;

So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,

He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS: Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO: In what particular thought to work I know not;

But in the gross and scope of my opinion,

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS: Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch

So nightly toils the subject of the land;

And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,

And foreign mart for implements of war;

Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task

Does not divide the Sunday from the week;

What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:

Who is 't that can inform me?

HORATIO: That can I;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,

Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet—  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—  
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit with his life all those his lands  
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror;  
Against the which, a moiety competent<sup>2</sup>  
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in 't; which is no other—  
As it doth well appear unto our state—  
But to recover of us, by strong hand  
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost. And this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

BERNARDO: I think it be no other but e'en so;  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch, so like the king  
That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO: A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

<sup>2</sup> [*moiety competent*: equal amount.]

The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;  
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
 Disasters in the sun; and the moist star  
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse;  
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,  
 As harbingers preceding still the fates  
 And prologue to the omen coming on,  
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
 Unto our climates and countrymen.

*Enter GHOST again.*

But, soft! behold! lo! where it comes again.  
 I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!  
 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,

*It spreads his arms.*

Speak to me:  
 If there be any good thing to be done,  
 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
 Speak to me:  
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
 Which happily foreknowing may avoid,  
 O! speak;  
 Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,

*The cock crows.*

Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HORATIO: Do, if it will not stand.

BERNARDO:

'Tis here!

HORATIO:

'Tis here!

*Exit GHOST.*

MARCELLUS: 'Tis gone!  
 We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
 To offer it the show of violence;  
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BERNARDO: It was about to speak when the cock crew.

HORATIO: And then it started like a guilty thing  
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
 The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
 Awake the god of day; and at his warning,  
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
 The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
 To his confine; and of the truth herein  
 This present object made probation.

MARCELLUS: It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
 Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long;  
 And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;  
 The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,  
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HORATIO: So have I heard and do in part believe it.  
 But, look, the morn in russet mantle clad,  
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill;  
 Break we our watch up; and by my advice  
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
 Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,  
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.  
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MARCELLUS: Let's do 't, I pray; and I this morning know  
 Where we shall find him most conveniently. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE TWO—A Room of State in the Castle.

*Flourish.* Enter CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK, GERTRUDE THE QUEEN, COUNCILORS, POLONIUS and his son LAERTES, HAMLET, *cum aliis* [including VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS].

KING: Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along: for all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Collegued with the dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,  
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress  
His further gait herein; in that the levies,

The lists and full proportions, are all made  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the king more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow.

Farewell and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS, VOLTIMAND: In that and all things will we show  
our duty.

KING: We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
And lose your voice; what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,  
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES: Dread my lord,  
Your leave and favour to return to France;  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
To show my duty in your coronation,  
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING: Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS: He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laboursome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:  
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING: Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—



HAMLET [*aside*]: A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET: Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy vailed lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET: Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN: If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET: Seems, madam! Nay, it is; I know not "seems."

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,

That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play:

But I have that within which passeth show;

These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING: 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:

But, you must know, your father lost a father;

That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound

In filial obligation for some term

To do obsequious sorrow; but to persevere

In obstinate condolence is a course

Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:

It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,

A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,

An understanding simple and unschool'd:

For what we know must be and is as common

As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

Why should we in our peevish opposition

Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,

A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

To reason most absurd, whose common theme

Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,

From the first corse till he that died to-day,

"This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth

This unprevailing woe, and think of us

As of a father; for let the world take note,

You are the most immediate to our throne;

And with no less nobility of love

Than that which dearest father bears his son

Do I impart toward you. For your intent

In going back to school in Wittenberg,

It is most retrograde to our desire;

And we beseech you, bend you to remain

Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN: Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:

I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET: I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING: Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:

Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;

This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet

Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,

No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,

But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,

And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,<sup>3</sup>

Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*Exeunt [all except HAMLET].*

HAMLET: O! that this too too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

<sup>3</sup> [*rouse*: draught of liquor; *bruit again*: echo loudly.]

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!  
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
 Seem to me all the uses of this world.  
 Fie on 't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
 That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
 Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
 But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:  
 So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
 Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother  
 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
 Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on; and yet, within a month,  
 Let me not think on 't: Frailty, thy name is woman!  
 A little month; or ere those shoes were old  
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears; why she, even she,—  
 O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
 Would have mourn'd longer,—married with mine uncle,  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father  
 Than I to Hercules: within a month,  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
 She married. O! most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.  
 It is not nor it cannot come to good;  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

*Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.*

HORATIO: Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET: I am glad to see you well.

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HORATIO: The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET: Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

Marcellus?

MARCELLUS: My good lord,—

HAMLET: I am very glad to see you. [*To BERNARDO.*] Good even, sir.

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO: A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET: I would not hear your enemy say so,

Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,

To make it truster of your own report

Against yourself; I know you are no truant.

But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO: My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET: I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO: Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAMLET: Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Ere I had ever seen that day, Horatio!

My father, methinks I see my father.

HORATIO: O! where, my lord?

HAMLET: In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO: I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

HAMLET: He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO: My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET: Saw? Who?

HORATIO: My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET: The king, my father?

HORATIO: Season your admiration for a while

With an attent ear, till I may deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

HAMLET: For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO: Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd: a figure like your father,  
Arm'd at all points exactly, cap-a-pe,<sup>4</sup>  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,  
And I with them the third night kept the watch;  
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
The apparition comes. I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET: But where was this?

MARCELLUS: My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET: Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO: My lord, I did;

But answer made it none; yet once methought  
It lifted up its head and did address  
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;  
But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away  
And vanish'd from our sight.

HAMLET: 'Tis very strange.

HORATIO: As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;  
And we did think it writ down in our duty  
To let you know of it.

<sup>4</sup> [*cap-a-pe*: from head to foot.]

HAMLET: Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.

Hold you the watch to-night?

MARCELLUS, BERNARDO: We do, my lord.

HAMLET: Arm'd, say you?

MARCELLUS, BERNARDO: Arm'd, my lord.

HAMLET: From top to toe?

MARCELLUS, BERNARDO: My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET: Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO: O yes! my lord; he wore his beaver up.

HAMLET: What! look'd he frowningly?

HORATIO: A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET: Pale or red?

HORATIO: Nay, very pale.

HAMLET: And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HORATIO: Most constantly.

HAMLET: I would I had been there.

HORATIO: It would have much amaz'd you.

HAMLET: Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

HORATIO: While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

MARCELLUS, BERNARDO: Longer, longer.

HORATIO: Not when I saw it.

HAMLET: His beard was grizzled, no?

HORATIO: It was, as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silver'd.

HAMLET: I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO: I warrant it will.

HAMLET: If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still;  
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:  
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

ALL: Our duty to your honour.

HAMLET: Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

*Exeunt [all but HAMLET].*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;  
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!  
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. *Exit.*

SCENE THREE—POLONIUS' *Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

LAERTES: My necessities are embark'd; farewell:  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA: Do you doubt that?

LAERTES: For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;  
No more.

OPHELIA: No more but so?

LAERTES: Think it no more:  
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own,  
For he himself is subject to his birth;  
He may not, as unvalu'd persons do,

Carve for himself, for on his choice depends  
The safety and the health of the whole state;  
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd  
Unto the voice and yielding of that bod  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed; which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmaster'd importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
The chariest maid is prodigal enough  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon;  
Virtue herself 'scapes not calumnious strokes;  
The canker galls the infants of the spring  
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA: I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede.

LAERTES: O! fear me not.

*Enter POLONIUS.*

I stay too long; but here my father comes.

A double blessing is a double grace;

Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS: Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,

And you are stay'd for. There, my blessing with thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory

Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,

Bear 't that th' opposed may beware of thee.

Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;

For the apparel oft proclaims the man,

And they in France of the best rank and station

Are most select and generous, chief in that.

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be;

For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

This above all: to thine own self be true,

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

LAERTES: Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS: The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

LAERTES: Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well

What I have said to you.

OPHELIA: 'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES: Farewell.

*Exit* LAERTES.

POLONIUS: What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPHELIA: So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS: Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you; and you yourself

Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.

If it be so,—as so 'tis put on me,

And that in way of caution,—I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly

As it behoves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPHELIA: He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders

Of his affection to me.

POLONIUS: Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA: I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

POLONIUS: Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,

Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;

Or,—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Roaming it thus,—you'll tender me a fool.<sup>5</sup>

OPHELIA: My lord, he hath importun'd me with love

In honourable fashion.

POLONIUS: Ay, fashion you may call it: go to, go to.

OPHELIA: And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS: Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul

Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,

Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,

Even in their promise, as it is a-making,

<sup>5</sup> [*tender me a fool*: give me a grandchild. "Fool" was an affectionate term for child.]

You must not take for fire. From this time  
 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;  
 Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
 Believe so much in him, that he is young,  
 And with a larger tether may he walk  
 Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
 Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,  
 Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,  
 The better to beguile. This is for all:  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
 Have you so slander any moment's leisure,  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
 Look to 't, I charge you; come your ways.

OPHELIA: I shall obey, my lord. *Exeunt.*

SCENE FOUR—*A Platform of the Castle.*

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.*

HAMLET: The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO: It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET: What hour now?

HORATIO: I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS: No, it is struck.

HORATIO: Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season  
 Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

*A flourish of trumpets, and two pieces  
 [of ordnance]<sup>6</sup> go off.*

What does this mean, my lord?

<sup>6</sup> [ordnance: cannon.]

HAMLET: The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,  
 Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
 The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO: Is it a custom?

HAMLET: Ay, marry, is 't:

But to my mind,—though I am native here  
 And to the manner born,—it is a custom  
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.  
 This heavy-headed revel east and west  
 Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations;  
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
 Soil our addition; and indeed it takes  
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
 So, oft it chanceth in particular men,  
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
 As, in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty,  
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,—  
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
 Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausible manners; that these men,  
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,  
 Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
 As infinite as man may undergo,  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption  
 From that particular fault: the dram of eale<sup>7</sup>  
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,  
 To his own scandal.

*Enter GHOST.*

<sup>7</sup> [eale: evil (?).]

HORATIO: Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET: Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane; O! answer me:  
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature  
So horribly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

GHOST beckons HAMLET.

HORATIO: It beckons you to go away with it,  
As if it some impartment did desire  
To you alone.

MARCELLUS: Look, with what courteous action  
It waves you to a more removed ground:  
But do not go with it.

HORATIO: No, by no means.

HAMLET: It will not speak; then, will I follow it.

HORATIO: Do not, my lord.

HAMLET: Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
It waves me forth again; I'll follow it.

HORATIO: What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it;  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.

HAMLET: It wafts me still. Go on, I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS: You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET:

Hold off your hands!

HORATIO: Be rul'd; you shall not go.

HAMLET:

My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen,

[*Breaking from them.*]

By heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:  
I say, away! Go on, I'll follow thee.

*Exeunt GHOST and HAMLET.*

HORATIO: He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS: Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO: Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS: Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO: Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS: Nay, let's follow him.

*Exeunt.*

SCENE FIVE—A more remote Part of the Platform.

*Enter GHOST and HAMLET.*

HAMLET: Whither wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.  
GHOST: Mark me.

HAMLET: I will.

GHOST: My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

HAMLET: Alas! poor ghost.

GHOST: Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET: Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST: So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET: What?

GHOST: I am thy father's spirit;  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand an end,  
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

HAMLET: O God!

GHOST: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET: Murder!

GHOST: Murder most foul, as in the best it is;  
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAMLET: Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift  
As meditation or the thoughts of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST: I find thee apt;  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death  
Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET: O my prophetic soul!  
My uncle!

GHOST: Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.  
O Hamlet! what a falling-off was there;  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage; and to decline  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine!  
But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,  
And prey on garbage.  
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within mine orchard,  
My custom always in the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,  
And in the porches of mine ears did pour  
The leperous distilment; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset



And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,<sup>a</sup>

No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head:

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;

Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest.

But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,

Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,

And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,

To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!

The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,

And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire;

Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

*Exit.*

HAMLET: O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart!

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,

But bear me stiffly up! Remember thee!

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe. Remember thee!

Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,

That youth and observation copied there;

<sup>a</sup> [Unhousel'd: without having received the Holy Communion; disappointed: unprepared; unanel'd: without having received extreme unction.]

And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables, my tables,—meet it is I set it down,

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark: [Writing.]

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;

It is, "Adieu, adieu! remember me."

I have sworn 't.

HORATIO and MARCELLUS (*within*): My lord! my lord!

*Enter* HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

MARCELLUS: Lord Hamlet!

HORATIO: Heaven secure him!

MARCELLUS: So be it!

HORATIO: Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAMLET: Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

MARCELLUS: How is 't, my noble lord?

HORATIO: What news, my lord?

HAMLET: O! wonderful.

HORATIO: Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET: No; you will reveal it.

HORATIO: Not I, my lord, by heaven!

MARCELLUS: Nor I, my lord.

HAMLET: How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?

But you'll be secret?

HORATIO, MARCELLUS: Ay, by heaven, my lord.

HAMLET: There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark,  
But he 's an arrant knave.

HORATIO: There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave,  
To tell us this.

HAMLET: Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,

I hold it fit that we shake hands and part;  
 You, as your business and desire shall point you,—  
 For every man hath business and desire,  
 Such as it is,—and, for mine own poor part,  
 Look you, I'll go pray.

HORATIO: These are but wild and hurling words, my lord.

HAMLET: I am sorry they offend you, heartily;  
 Yes, faith, heartily.

HORATIO: There's no offence, my lord.

HAMLET: Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
 And much offence, too. Touching this vision here,  
 It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you;  
 For your desire to know what is between us,  
 O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,  
 As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,  
 Give me one poor request.

HORATIO: What is 't, my lord? we will.

HAMLET: Never make known what you have seen to-night.

HORATIO, MARCELLUS: My lord, we will not.

HAMLET: Nay, but swear 't.

HORATIO: In faith,

My lord, not I.

MARCELLUS: Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET: Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS: We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAMLET: Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST *cries under the stage.*

GHOST: Swear.

HAMLET: Ah, ha, boy! sayst thou so? art thou there, true-penny?  
 Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—  
 Consent to swear.

HORATIO: Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET: Never to speak of this that you have seen,  
 Swear by my sword.

GHOST [*beneath*]: Swear.

HAMLET: *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground.

Come hither, gentlemen,  
 And lay your hands again upon my sword:  
 Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
 Swear by my sword.

GHOST [*beneath*]: Swear.

HAMLET: Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?

A worthy pioneer! once more remove, good friends.

HORATIO: O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET: And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
 Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,  
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,  
 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
 To put an antic disposition on,  
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,  
 With arms encumber'd thus, or thus, head shake,  
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,  
 As, "Well, well, we know," or, "We could, an if we would";  
 Or, "If we list to speak," or, "There be, an if they might";  
 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note  
 That you know aught of me: this not to do,  
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you,  
 Swear.

GHOST [*beneath*]: Swear. [*They swear.*]

HAMLET: Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,  
 With all my love I do commend me to you:  
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is  
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,  
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;  
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.  
 The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,  
 That ever I was born to set it right!  
 Nay, come, let's go together.

*Exeunt.*

## ACT II

SCENE ONE—POLONIUS' *Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter* POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

POLONIUS: Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO: I will, my lord.

POLONIUS: You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
Before you visit him, to make inquiry  
Of his behaviour.

REYNALDO: My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS: Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,  
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;  
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,  
What company, at what expense; and finding  
By this encompassment and drift of question  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it:  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;  
As thus, "I know his father, and his friends,  
And, in part, him"; do you mark this, Reynaldo?

REYNALDO: Ay, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS: "And, in part, him; but," you may say, "not well:  
But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild,  
Addicted so and so"; and there put on him  
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank  
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;  
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

REYNALDO: As gaming, my lord?

POLONIUS: Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,  
Drabbing; you may go so far.

REYNALDO: My lord, that would dishonour him.

POLONIUS: Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.  
You must not put another scandal on him,

That he is open to incontinency;  
That's not my meaning; but breathe his faults so quaintly  
That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault.

REYNALDO: But, my good lord,—

POLONIUS: Wherefore should you do this?

REYNALDO: Ay, my lord,  
I would know that.

POLONIUS: Marry, sir, here's my drift;  
And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:  
You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,  
Mark you,  
Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd,  
He closes with you in this consequence;  
"Good sir," or so; or "friend," or "gentleman,"  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

REYNALDO: Very good, my lord.

POLONIUS: And then, sir, does he this,—he does,—what was  
I about to say? By the mass I was about to say something:  
where did I leave?

REYNALDO: At "closes in the consequence."

At "friend or so," and "gentleman."

POLONIUS: At "closes in the consequence," ay, marry;  
He closes with you thus: "I know the gentleman;  
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,  
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,  
There was a' gaming; there o'ertook in 's rouse;  
There falling out at tennis"; or perchance,  
"I saw him enter such a house of sale,"  
*Videlicet*, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now;  
 Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;  
 And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,  
 With windlasses, and with assays of bias,  
 By indirections find directions out:  
 So by my former lecture and advice  
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

REYNALDO: My lord, I have.

POLONIUS: God be wi' you; fare you well.

REYNALDO: Good my lord!

POLONIUS: Observe his inclination in yourself.

REYNALDO: I shall, my lord.

POLONIUS: And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO: Well, my lord.

POLONIUS: Farewell! *Exit* REYNALDO.

*Enter* OPHELIA.

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

OPHELIA: Alas! my lord, I have been so affrighted.

POLONIUS: With what, in the name of God?

OPHELIA: My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd;  
 No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,  
 Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;  
 Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;  
 And with a look so piteous in purport  
 As if he had been loosed out of hell  
 To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

POLONIUS: Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA: My lord, I do not know;

But truly I do fear it.

POLONIUS: What said he?

OPHELIA: He took me by the wrist and held me hard,  
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm,

And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
 He falls to such perusal of my face  
 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;  
 At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
 He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound  
 That it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
 And end his being. That done, he lets me go,  
 And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
 He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;  
 For out o' doors he went without their help,  
 And to the last bended their light on me.

POLONIUS: Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.

This is the very ecstasy of love,

Whose violent property fordoes itself

And leads the will to desperate undertakings

As oft as any passion under heaven

That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.

What! have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA: No, my good lord; but, as you did command,

I did repel his letters and denied

His access to me.

POLONIUS: That hath made him mad.

I am sorry that with better heed and judgment

I had not quoted him; I fear'd he did but trifle,

And meant to wrack thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!

By heaven, it is as proper to our age

To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions

As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:

This must be known; which, being kept close, might move

More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

Come.

*Exeunt.*

## SCENE TWO—A Room in the Castle.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, with others.*

KING: Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!  
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,  
 The need we have to use you did provoke  
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,  
 Since nor the exterior nor the inward man  
 Resembles that it was. What it should be  
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
 So much from the understanding of himself,  
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,  
 That, being of so young days brought up with him,  
 And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,  
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
 Some little time; so by your companies  
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
 So much as from occasion you may glean,  
 Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,  
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN: Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;  
 And sure I am two men there are not living  
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
 To show us so much gentry and good will  
 As to expend your time with us awhile,  
 For the supply and profit of our hope,  
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
 As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ: Both your majesties  
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
 Put your dread pleasures more into command  
 Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN: But we both obey,  
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,

To lay our service freely at your feet,  
 To be commanded.

KING: Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN: Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz;  
 And I beseech you instantly to visit  
 My too much changed son. Go, some of you,  
 And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUILDENSTERN: Heavens make our presence, and our practices  
 Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN: Ay, amen!

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ,  
 GUILDENSTERN, [and some Attendants].*

*Enter POLONIUS.*

POLONIUS: The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,  
 Are joyfully return'd.

KING: Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS: Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,  
 I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,  
 Both to my God, one to my gracious king;  
 And I do think—or else this brain of mine  
 Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
 As it hath us'd to do—that I have found  
 The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING: O! speak of that; that do I long to hear.

POLONIUS: Give first admittance to the ambassadors;  
 My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING: Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

*[Exit POLONIUS.]*

He tells me, my sweet queen, that he hath found  
 The head and source of all your son's distemper.

QUEEN: I doubt it is no other but the main;

His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING: Well, we shall sift him.

*Enter POLONIUS, VOLTIMAND, and CORNELIUS.*

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTIMAND: Most fair return of greetings, and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress  
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;  
But, better look'd into, he truly found  
It was against your highness: whereat griev'd,  
That so his sickness, age, and impotence  
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests  
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys,  
Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,  
Makes vow before his uncle never more  
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.  
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,  
And his commission to employ those soldiers,  
So levied as before, against the Polack;  
With an entreaty, herein further shown, [*Giving a paper.*]  
That it might please you to give quiet pass  
Through your dominions for this enterprise,  
On such regards of safety and allowance  
As therein are set down.

KING: It likes us well;  
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,  
Answer, and think upon this business:  
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour.  
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:  
Most welcome home.

*Exeunt Ambassadors*  
[VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS].

POLONIUS: This business is well ended.  
My liege, and madam, to expostulate  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:  
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,  
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?  
But let that go.

QUEEN: More matter, with less art.

POLONIUS: Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity;  
And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
Mad let us grant him, then; and now remains  
That we find out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause;  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.  
Perpend.

I have a daughter, have while she is mine;  
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
Hath given me this: now, gather, and surmise. [*Reads.*]  
"To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified  
Ophelia.—"

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; "beautified" is a vile phrase;  
but you shall hear. Thus:

"In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.—"

QUEEN: Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS: Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

"Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.

O dear Ophelia! I am ill at these numbers: I have not art to  
reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best!  
believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst  
this machine is to him,

HAMLET."

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me;  
And more above, hath his solicitings,  
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,  
All given to mine ear.

KING: But how hath she  
Receiv'd his love?

POLONIUS: What do you think of me?

KING: As of a man faithful and honourable.

POLONIUS: I would fain prove so. But what might you think,  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing,—  
As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me,—what might you,  
Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,  
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,  
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;  
What might you think? No, I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
"Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;  
This must not be": and then I precepts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;  
And he, repulsed,—a short tale to make,—  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness; and by this declension  
Into the madness wherein now he raves,  
And all we wail for.

KING: Do you think 'tis this?

QUEEN: It may be, very likely.

POLONIUS: Hath there been such a time,—I'd fain know  
that,—

That I have positively said, "'Tis so,"  
When it prov'd otherwise?

KING: Not that I know.

POLONIUS [*pointing to his head and shoulder*]: Take this from  
this, if this be otherwise:

If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

KING: How may we try it further?

POLONIUS: You know sometimes he walks four hours together  
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN: So he does indeed.

POLONIUS: At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him;  
Be you and I behind an arras then;  
Mark the encounter; if he love her not,  
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm, and carters.

KING: We will try it.

*Enter HAMLET reading on a book.*

QUEEN: But look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

POLONIUS: Away! I do beseech you, both away.  
I'll board him presently.

*Exeunt KING, QUEEN, [and Attendants].*

O! give me leave.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET: Well, God a-mercy.

POLONIUS: Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET: Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS: Not I, my lord.

HAMLET: Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS: Honest, my lord!

HAMLET: Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one  
man picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS: That's very true, my lord.  
 HAMLET: For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?  
 POLONIUS: I have, my lord.  
 HAMLET: Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.  
 POLONIUS [*aside*]: How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord?  
 HAMLET: Words, words, words.  
 POLONIUS: What is the matter, my lord?  
 HAMLET: Between who?  
 POLONIUS: I mean the matter that you read, my lord.  
 HAMLET: Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.  
 POLONIUS [*aside*]: Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?  
 HAMLET: Into my grave?  
 POLONIUS: Indeed, that is out of the air. [*Aside.*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.  
 HAMLET: You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS: Fare you well, my lord. [*Going.*]  
 HAMLET: These tedious old fools!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

POLONIUS: You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.  
 ROSENCRANTZ [*to POLONIUS*]: God save you, sir!  
 [*Exit POLONIUS.*]

GUILDENSTERN: Mine honoured lord!  
 ROSENCRANTZ: My most dear lord!  
 HAMLET: My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?  
 ROSENCRANTZ: As the indifferent children of the earth.  
 GUILDENSTERN: Happy in that we are not over happy; on Fortune's cap we are not the very button.  
 HAMLET: Nor the soles of her shoe?  
 ROSENCRANTZ: Neither, my lord.  
 HAMLET: Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?  
 GUILDENSTERN: Faith, her privates we.  
 HAMLET: In the secret parts of Fortune? O! most true; she is a strumpet. What news?  
 ROSENCRANTZ: None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.  
 HAMLET: Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?  
 GUILDENSTERN: Prison, my lord!  
 HAMLET: Denmark's a prison.  
 ROSENCRANTZ: Then is the world one.  
 HAMLET: A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.  
 ROSENCRANTZ: We think not so, my lord.  
 HAMLET: Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.



ROSENCRANTZ: Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET: O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUILDENSTERN: Which dreams, indeed, are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

HAMLET: A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROSENCRANTZ: Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAMLET: Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN: We'll wait upon you.

HAMLET: No such matter; I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ: To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAMLET: Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN: What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET: Why anything, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ: To what end, my lord?

HAMLET: That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no!

ROSENCRANTZ [*aside to GUILDENSTERN*]: What say you?

HAMLET: Nay, then, I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN: My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET: I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late,—but wherefore I know not,—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ: My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET: Why did you laugh then, when I said "man delights not me?"

ROSENCRANTZ: To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

HAMLET: He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere;<sup>9</sup> and

<sup>9</sup> [*tickle o' the sere*: yield easily to any impulse.]

the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ: Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAMLET: How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROSENCRANTZ: I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

HAMLET: Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

ROSENCRANTZ: No, indeed they are not.

HAMLET: How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

ROSENCRANTZ: Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question,<sup>10</sup> and are most tyrannically clapped for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages,—so they call them,—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills,<sup>11</sup> and dare scarce come thither.

HAMLET: What! are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players,—as it is most like, if their means are no better,—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

ROSENCRANTZ: Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides: and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument,<sup>12</sup> unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

<sup>10</sup> [*eyases*: young hawks; *cry . . . question*: recite at the highest pitch of the voice.]

<sup>11</sup> [*afraid of goose-quills*: afraid of being satirized.]

<sup>12</sup> [*argument*: subject matter, plot.]

HAMLET: Is it possible?

GUILDENSTERN: O! there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET: Do the boys carry it away?

ROSENCRANTZ: Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

HAMLET: It is not strange; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

*Flourish for the Players.*

GUILDENSTERN: There are the players.

HAMLET: Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players—which, I tell you, must show fairly outward—should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN: In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET: I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

*Enter* POLONIUS.

POLONIUS: Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAMLET: Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too; at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

ROSENCRANTZ: Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

HAMLET: I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir; o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

POLONIUS: My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET: My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

POLONIUS: The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET: Buzz, buzz!

POLONIUS: Upon my honour,—

HAMLET: Then came each actor on his ass,—

POLONIUS: The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

HAMLET: O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

POLONIUS: What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET: Why

“One fair daughter and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.”

POLONIUS [*aside*]: Still on my daughter.

HAMLET: Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

POLONIUS: If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

HAMLET: Nay, that follows not.

POLONIUS: What follows, then, my lord?

HAMLET: Why,

“As by lot, God wot.”

And then, you know,

“It came to pass, as most like it was.—”

The first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look where my abridgments come.

*Enter four or five Players.*

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well: welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Thy

face is valanced since I saw thee last: comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What! my young lady and mistress! By 'r lady, your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.<sup>13</sup> Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are welcome. We'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at anything we see: we'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAYER: What speech, my lord?

HAMLET: I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved; 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see:—

“The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,—”

'Tis not so, it begins with Pyrrhus:—

“The rugged Pyrrhus, he, whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot  
Now is he total gules; horribly trick'd<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [*chopine*: a Venetian raised shoe often worn by actors.]

<sup>14</sup> [*gules*: red, in heraldry; *trick'd*: painted.]

With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
 Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,  
 That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
 To their vile murders: roasted in wrath and fire,  
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
 Old grandsire Priam seeks."

So proceed you.

POLONIUS: 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent  
 and good discretion.

FIRST PLAYER: "Anon, he finds him  
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
 Repugnant to command. Unequal match'd,  
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;  
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
 Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for lo! his sword,  
 Which was declining on the milky head  
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:  
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
 And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
 Did nothing.

But, as we often see, against some storm,  
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
 The bold winds speechless and the orb below  
 As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
 Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
 Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
 On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,  
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
 Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,

In general synod, take away her power;  
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,  
 As low as to the fiends!"

POLONIUS: This is too long.

HAMLET: It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say  
 on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on;  
 come to Hecuba.

FIRST PLAYER: "But who, O! who had seen the mobled<sup>13</sup>  
 queen—"

HAMLET: "The mobled queen?"—

POLONIUS: That's good; "mobled queen" is good.

FIRST PLAYER: "Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the  
 flames

With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head  
 Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,  
 About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
 A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;  
 Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,  
 'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd:  
 But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
 The instant burst of clamour that she made—  
 Unless things mortal move them not at all—  
 Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,  
 And passion in the gods."

POLONIUS: Look! wh'er he has not turned his colour and has  
 tears in 's eyes. Prithee, no more.

GUILDENSTERN: 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.  
 Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do  
 you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts  
 and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were

<sup>13</sup> [*mobled*: muffled.]

better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

POLONIUS: My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET: God's bodikins, man, much better; use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POLONIUS: Come, sirs.

HAMLET: Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. *Exit*

POLONIUS [*with all the Players but the FIRST*]. Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

FIRST PLAYER: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: We'll ha 't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't, could you not?

FIRST PLAYER: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit FIRST PLAYER. To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ: Good my lord!

*Exeunt [ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN].*

HAMLET: Ay, so, God be wi' ye! Now I am alone.

O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That from her working all his visage wann'd,

Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba

That he should weep for her? What would he do

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property and most dear life

A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?

Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Ha!

'Swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be

But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall

To make oppression bitter, or ere this

I should have fatted all the region kites

With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!

O! vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave

That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,

Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,

And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,

A scullion!

Fie upon 't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard,

That guilty creatures sitting at a play

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaim'd their malefactions;

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players

Play something like the murder of my father  
 Before mine uncle; I'll observe his looks;  
 I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench  
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
 May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy—  
 As he is very potent with such spirits—  
 Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds  
 More relative than this: the play's the thing  
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

*Exit.*

## ACT III

## SCENE ONE—A Room in the Castle.

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ,  
 GUILDENSTERN, *and* Lords.

KING: And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
 Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROSENCRANTZ: He does confess he feels himself distracted;  
 But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN: Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,  
 But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,  
 When we would bring him on to some confession  
 Of his true state.

QUEEN: Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ: Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN: But with much forcing of his disposition.

ROSENCRANTZ: Niggard of question, but of our demands  
 Most free in his reply.

QUEEN: Did you assay him  
 To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ: Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
 We o'er-raught on the way; of these we told him,  
 And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
 To hear of it: they are about the court,  
 And, as I think, they have already order  
 This night to play before him.

POLONIUS: 'Tis most true;  
 And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
 To hear and see the matter.

KING: With all my heart; and it doth much content me  
 To hear him so inclin'd.  
 Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
 And drive his purpose on to these delights.